

December 19, 1996

Puget Sound Photographic Collector's Society, Inc.

VolXVIII No. 3.

## WHAT

NEXT REGULAR MEETING OF PSPCS

## WHERE

DES MOINES MASONIC TEMPLE 2208rd S. 223st. (Take Midway exit #149 west off I-5..go to first stop light west of Pacific HWY. S...turn right.)

## WHEN

Thursday, December 19, 1996..7:30 till 10:00 p.m. (doors open about 6:30)

## WHY

This is our special Christmas meeting. Short meeting..Show &amp; Tell.. door prizes..gift exchange..the consuming of food &amp; drink.

COME JOIN US AT OUR HOLIDAY MEETING:

This is the meeting to bring your kids and better half. The club will provide a big spread of food and drink. (two years ago we had more food then people. Last year we had more people then food. This year we are planning on lots of both!)

Then we will have our infamous gift exchange. Remember, this is where each person who wants to take part (i.e. you can come and eat etc and not be part of the gift exchange if you so choose) by bringing a wrapped photographic related gift. The gift should be worth at least ten dollars and be something you would enjoy receiving yourself.

This has been a most enjoyable meeting in the past. Santa has faxed in to say that he will be there to help. See you there! HO! HO! HO!

STOLEN CAMERA REPORT:

Will you all keep an eye out for the following camera which was stolen from member Mike Carmel (206) 782-4822). Nikon S-2 with 1.4 Nikkor lens with shade and case. Serial number: 6175587.

CHRISTMAS IS A NICE TIME TO GIVE:

That it is! And what better gift to yourself then to pay your 1997 P.S.P.C.S. dues! Still only ten..I SAY TEN DOLLARS!!..the best buy around. Please send to Shirley or pay her at the meeting. Thanks!

ANOTHER CAMERA SHOW:

At the Portland show cards were given out stating that Collector's Market, Inc. was going to present a Camera Collector's Show on Saturday, January 25, 1997. Tables rates were: one for \$25.00; 2 for \$40.00; 3 for \$50.00 Saturday set-up. To be held just off I-5 at Delta Park in Portland. I'm told it is an old Pay N Pak Bldg. with bad parking. For all information call (503) 283-2940.

thanks The Photographic Historical Society Newsletter

This Month's Mystery Question- Answer at end of newsletter

What do the names **Jessop** and **Elke** mean to modern photography?

**\*\*BACKSIDE INFORMATION\*\***

P.S.P.C.S., Inc.'s regular November meeting came to order at 7:32 p.m. with 38 members and 1 guest present. Minutes of September meeting were approved. Treasurer reported we still had some funds after ordering McKeown's new book.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

Shirley announced that McKeown's were in and we also had some Lind's Lists left. Report on Interclub show indicated that we should try same set-up again next year. This year we had about 60 tables. Next year another room will be added. The Victoria show was small but well attended. The Vancouver show report indicated that most items seemed overpriced. There were lots of buyers and the consignment table went over well. It was indicated that maybe a consignment table should be tried at our show. The Boise show was little, 40 tables, 139 people thru the door. There was quite a bit of collector and user stuff. Boise may have another one in February. The Portland show was nice as usual but sales were done. The 1997 Show Committee reported that they had their first meeting and everything is on schedule.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

A discussion was held on ordering some cameras with the PSPCS logo on them. General consensus was no interest. Someone suggested maybe ordering watches and the general consensus was that it might be worth looking into later.

A lengthy discussion was held on getting a web page for PSPCS. It was moved, seconded, and passed that the President appoint a committee to look into the question and then report back to the membership in January. The President appointed Bob Kelly Chairman with a committee of Ed Frey, Bob Wallis and Mike Carmel.

Next meeting will be the Club's Christmas party with food, gifts and Santa. Gifts should be at least a \$10 value..photography related and NO JUNK!

**SHOW & TELL..AUCTION..DOOR PRIZES:**

Five members brought treasures to Show & Tell. Six items were auctioned..4 brought in \$105.50 and two went unsold. Door prizes were won by Dave Studebaker..Kodak coffee mug..and Mike Carmel won "Evolution of Japanese Cameras"  
Meeting adjourned at 9:07 p.m. for selling & trading.

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**SINCERE BEST HOLIDAY WISHES TO YOU & YOURS**



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THE BELLOWS Newsletter is published 10 times per year by Puget Sound Photographic Collector's Society, Inc. Information for The Bellows should be sent to: Bill Kimber 1413 Weathervane Dr., Tacoma, WA 98466-5712 (206) 564-4046.

Dues are \$10.00 per year and should be sent to Secretary/Treasurer Shirley Sparrow P.O. Box 70, Ronald, WA 98940 (509) 649-2477. P.S.P.C.S. members receive first notification of our spring show.

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PRESIDENT: DAVE STUDEBAKER, (206) 582-4878

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This is the first of two articles on the Gowlandflex and Mr. Peter Gowland; written by P.S.P.C.S. member Robert Peters. They first appeared in CameraShopper.

### Gowlandflex 4x5 Twin lens Reflex ©1996

Robert Peters

Looking like an oversized Rolleiflex twin lens reflex ("TLR"), the 4x5 Gowlandflex is a real traffic stopper wherever it appears. It's not the kind of camera a photo enthusiast can see and not say *something*--usually starting with, "Wow"!

My own Gowlandflex is the earlier of two versions developed by Peter Gowland, well known glamour and portrait photographer. The body of the earlier (larger) version is built of wood and measures 12 inches high, 6-1/2 inches wide, and 8-1/2 inches front to back. It's *impressive!* I called Gowland to ask about the development of this unusual camera. He shared the following story with me and also discussed some of his career highlights.

In 1945, Gowland, then a young Army photographer, read an article about a TLR built in France by portrait photographer Philippe Halsman. Later, in the early Fifties, according to Gowland, Fairchild Camera was considering the introduction of a 4X5 TLR. The Fairchild prototype was of cast aluminum construction and was reported to weigh a hefty 17 pounds.

Gowland thought a 4X5 TLR would be ideal for studio use. He had used Rolleiflex TLRs (17 of them, all told!) until 1955, but they were not entirely suited to his needs. The Graflex single lens reflex 4x5 wooden model

was limited to a 1/10 second sync speed by its focal plane shutter, while the Speed Graphic did not allow quick, right side up composition on its ground glass; also, view cameras required too much time to set up and were not suited to candid photography. In 1957, disappointed after Fairchild apparently shelved plans to release its TLR, Gowland decided to get out his Shopsmith and build a 4x5 TLR for his own use. This first camera was not built to sell. Gowland states, "If these cameras (or any of the equipment I build) had been available, I would not have made them."

As far as Gowland knows, there was no other 4x5 TLR on the market at the time he introduced the Gowlandflex. He mentioned that Cambo later introduced one, but it did *not* incorporate the reflex mirror and top viewfinder of a "typical" TLR. The camera had two groundglasses on the back--which meant if it was to be hand held, it had to be held away from the chest at eye level. This did not lend the camera to candid use, and it was apparently discontinued.

The first "Gowlandflex" used a 5X7 vertical format, but also took 4X5's horizontally. It was equipped with matching 240mm Schneider Xenar lenses. The taking lens was mounted in a Compound shutter with synch speeds to 1/200th second; the viewing lens was mounted in a barrel. The diaphragm of the viewing lens allowed stopping down to "preview" depth of field--a feature not found in any other known production TLR. The image in the viewfinder is right side up.

Other commercial photographers, on seeing the first Gowlandflex, encouraged Peter Gowland to produce a few others for them. In 1960, Gowland made a first run of 10, some in 4x5, a few others in 5x7 format. The cameras in this first production run were made by a contractor/photographer friend who built them in his garage. The leather covering for these cameras was applied by a luggage maker. Cameras were numbered beginning at 500. Today's Gowlandflexes and other Gowland cameras are still crafted by hand in his shop in runs of 20.



aluminum current model

Weight for the first series Gowlandflex was around 7 pounds. Not a featherweight, but--surprisingly--much lighter than it looks, and quite manageable for hand held candids with an accessory grip or flash bracket. production of the wooden camera was discontinued in 1966, after roughly 160 had been built.

Shortly after introduction of the leather covered wooden model, a more compact aluminum model with reduced assembly cost was introduced. Its weight was about the same, but the 6x7 inch (not centimeter!) ground glass of the original model's viewfinder was reduced to 5x5 inches in the aluminum model. Many of the focusing hoods and other viewfinder accessories for the aluminum cameras can be used on the earlier model through adapters offered by Gowland.

The first model had a moving mask below the groundglass for parallax correction similar to that of the Rolleiflex TLR, while the aluminum model uses a cam which raises and lowers the top (viewing) lens to correct for parallax. The metal mask of the earlier model is accurate only with the focal length of the lens provided by Gowland. The aluminum camera allowed a change of cams from the outside for up to two different focal lengths. However, this is not the kind of change one does in the middle of a sitting, so some pros own and use two Gowlandflexes with lenses of different focal length. The earlier model is preferred by some pros, because its larger size is more impressive in a studio. Cont. on page four 3





## Gowlandflex Cont.....

The Gowlandflex uses a Graflok ("universal") back and accepts standard 4x5 cut film holders or common 4x5 adapters for 120 and 70mm film. Buyers of the first model had to specify if they wanted to use cut film holders--not all cameras of the first model would accept them. The Graflok back revolves for vertical or horizontal composition, and the rear groundglass allows focusing through the taking lens when desirable to preview special effects or when using taking lenses in focal lengths other than as supplied with the camera. The camera was offered with a choice of 180, 210, 240 mm Symmar taking lenses, and a model equipped with a 360mm TeleXenar was available. With 180mm lens, the shortest focal length offered on the standard Gowlandflex, the camera focused to about two feet. The wide-angle and special "twin-film" cameras will take 75 through 210mm lenses. Another special model uses a 300mm lens.

To date about 500 of the aluminum model have been produced, although not all of these may have serial numbers. Gowland sells a reconditioned Gowlandflex body (only) for around \$800 for the "wood" model, and around \$850 or more for the aluminum version. The price of new Gowlandflexes depends on which lenses are supplied, and what optional accessories are selected. Variants are also available. A wide angle model allows lenses as short as 75 mm, but is focused on a rear (rather than top) groundglass. Photographers occasionally order a 4x5 model adapted for a 5x7 back. To date, three 8x10 Gowlandflexes have been built, as has one 5x7 model accepting an 8x10 back. A new eight pound 8x10 Gowlandflex is based on a 4x5 aerial camera, but bears little resemblance to earlier "conventional" Gowlandflexes.

Notable Gowlandflex purchasers and users include Yousuf Karsh and Annie Liebovitz (each own two), Eastman Kodak, the FBI, Playboy, John Huet (Huet uses an 8x10), and Mark Tucker, a top Nashville photographer. Gowland even sold one to Philippe Halsman, who, as mentioned earlier, helped inspire the camera. It is interesting to note in this day and age that a large share of Gowland's production of Gowlandflexes and other professional equipment is exported to Japan!



WATCH THE BIRDIE

Snap Shots is used with thanks to  
Arizona Photographic Collectors Ed.

## Snap Shots

### NEW GRAFLEX PUBLICATION:

Dedicated to enriching the study of the Graflex Company, its history and products is being published by and for hobbyists. At \$14 per year subscription price it will include articles on all aspects of this late great American camera manufacturer including restoration and user articles. Contact Mike Hanemann, P.O. Box 22374, Milwaukee, OR 97269. (Make checks to Milke too!)

### NEED 127 SIZE FILM? IT'S

**AVAILABLE:** A limited supply of fresh Jessop (Efke) b/w 200 ASA film (expiration date of Jan. 1999) is being offered by Kenneth C. Poertner, Dept. APC, 613 Hillview Drive, Boise, Idaho 83712. He is offering these at \$4 per roll with a 6 roll minimum plus \$4 postage. 1 dozen rolls are \$24 + \$4 postage and 2 dozen rolls are \$84 + \$5 postage. There are lots of fine cameras using 127 film so dig one out and have at it.

## Answer to This Month's Mystery Question

Jessop and Efke are names used for the same film made in former Eastern European factories. Primarily black and white, they are supplied in some sizes, such as 127, no longer available from major manufacturers.